**The Unjust War**

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Israeli defence forces (DF) have killed more than eight thousand Palestinian civilians, including at least 3342 children, 2062 women, 116 medics, twenty-four journalists etc. in Gaza so far. Besides, about 25000 Palestinians are injured and an estimated 1870 are reported missing, including 1020 children, mostly buried under the debris of the bombed buildings. The Israeli bombing campaign has severed Gaza’s access to vital provisions, ranging from food to fuel, which has devastated entire neighborhoods and pushed humanitarian conditions to a critical juncture. In utter violation of Geneva Convention, they are committing war crimes like bombing the hospitals and houses with impunity. CNN reported that clean water shortage and fuel shortage are on verge of ‘catastrophe.’

Amidst this carnage of innocent people, the deafening silence and criminal inaction of the so-called civilized Western world is unforgiving. The lofty concept of ‘Just war,’ hailed and admired by them, has been trampled with impunity. They have cared a fig about the much-trumpeted concepts of Jus ad bellum (just reasons for war) and “jus in bello” (just conduct in war). The UN is pretending as if nothing is happening while the genocide is underway in broad daylight. The question is are these concepts and principles restricted to discussions, books, research, museums, and Muslims only? Do they care that this sort of selective application of concepts and conventions will further exacerbate the lack of confidence and trust the weaker countries have in the UN, the US and in the concepts like ‘Just war.”

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The inalienable ingredients of proportionality and urgency have been conveniently thrown to wind because Hamas’s armed wing attacked Israel and killed around 1400 Israelis, including 286 soldiers. In a huge disproportionate response Israel has embarked on the mission to kill all the Palestinians in Gaza and raise it to ground. The latest IDF attack on the Jabalia refugee camp speaks volumes of the nefarious designs of Netanyahu and his supporters. It is not only the IDF operating against Hamas and Gaza civilians, 360,000 reservists, who are civilians, that Israel summoned after the October 7 Hamas attack, have been tasked to take part in the mayhem of the Palestinians.

In his vengeance, Prime Minister Netanyahu should not forget the principles of Just War, especially the level of force and proportional means of force to be used against the enemy. It is also important to justify how and where to apply force. His forces are not using Right Conduct in making distinction of military targets from civilian ones. Unfortunately, the leaders of the West are praising and pampering Netanyahu for his unjust war. The US President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron visited Israel in the past few days and pledged their unconditional support to Israel in their war against Palestinians. It has encouraged and emboldened Israel to go ahead with end game in Gaza.

It is a point to ponder that the Muslim world remained silent and divided when Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan were invaded and destroyed. But their reaction on Israeli attack on Palestine is bound to be different and belligerent. Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem has a special place in the hearts of Muslims across the world because from here Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ascended to heaven for a night. Unbounded reverence and love for the Prophet is the essential ingredient of the faith of every Muslim. They consider attack on Palestine as attack on the foundations of their faith. Their tactical silence of the rulers and the governments of the Muslim countries may last for long period but it should not be taken as the approval.

Besides this basic reason, the magnitude of barbarities being perpetrated against Palestinians has badly bruised the sensibilities of the peoples of Muslim countries. They are already agitating and protesting over the plight of the people of Gaza at the hands of IDF. The widening gulf of hatred between the faiths and regions would be even more devastating than the physical destruction caused by the war. It is not a far-fetched idea to think that it can become a flash point for the clash of civilizations. Netanyahu has unabashedly, in an article published in the Wall Street Journal, termed it a ‘battle of civilizations.’ Probably, it is his ploy to instigate and intimidate the West to firmly stay on his side in this barbaric campaign. The space for co-existence in harmony on this globe has been shrinking for years now; the Israeli onslaught against Gaza has given it an unprecedented impetus. If the Israeli PM says it is time for war not ceasefire, on which legal or moral tradition he is relying? His explicit uttering at a very explosive time contains all the ingredients to push the world to Armageddon.

Pakistan has always advocated peace in the world but never hesitated to extend moral and political support to the Palestinians. In line with the sterling guidelines of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, it has demanded of immediate ceasefire in Gaza. It has made it clear that Israel has no right to violate the UN conventions that discourage war mongering and atrocities against the civilians. Additionally, the debate and hope of potential Israeli-Pakistani ties have been buried deep under the rubble of Gaza homes destroyed by the Israeli air force.

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